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Item 124 (v) of the provisional agenda*
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Letter dated 20 July 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization have signed the attached declaration at the tenth annual summit of the Organization, which was held in Tashkent on 10 and 11 June 2010 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 124 (v) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) B. **Aitimova**

* A/65/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 20 July 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Declaration of the tenth meeting of the Council of the Heads of States members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Tashkent, 10-11 June 2010)

The tenth meeting of the Council of the Heads of States members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held on 10 and 11 June 2010 in Tashkent. Following an exchange of views on important regional and international issues, the participants hereby declare the following:

1. Significant changes and fundamental transformations are taking place in today's dynamically developing world. In an increasingly multipolar world, States are becoming more interdependent and globalization is gaining momentum. This is having a major impact on the development of the global economy and on international relations.

- The States members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (hereinafter "SCO" or "the Organization") are united in their assessment of the changes occurring in the world, which pose not only new threats and challenges, but also provide opportunities for progress towards a more just political and economic world order on the basis of the rule of international law and equal and mutually beneficial cooperation among all countries, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

- The SCO member States intend to strictly abide by the spirit of the SCO Charter and the provisions of the Treaty for Long-term Good-Neighbourly Relations, Friendship and Cooperation, and to implement the basic purposes and principles of the Organization.

2. In the years since its establishment, SCO has become an important factor in regional and international security and cooperation, and has proved to be an effective and transparent multilateral association. In its policies, the Organization will continue to exclude bloc, ideologized or confrontational approaches when addressing issues of international and regional development.

- The SCO member States are determined to pursue close and comprehensive cooperation within the Organization's framework in order to strengthen its role as a reliable guarantor of peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

3. In the light of developments in the Kyrgyz Republic, the member States reaffirm their principled position of mutual support for State sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

- The member States oppose interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States, or actions that may cause tensions in the region, and believe that all disagreements must be settled exclusively by political and diplomatic means through dialogue and negotiations.

- The SCO member States, stressing the importance for the entire region of stabilizing the political situation in Kyrgyzstan as swiftly as possible, have expressed their readiness to provide the Kyrgyz Republic with the necessary support and assistance to that end.

4. The SCO member States reaffirm that the United Nations plays a central role in the system of international relations as a unique and, in many respects, irreplaceable mechanism for multilateral cooperation.

- The member States intend to undertake further cooperation on the issue of reforming the United Nations and its Security Council.

- Since reform affects the interests of all Member States of the United Nations, open and comprehensive consultations should continue with a view drawing up an integrated draft embodying the broadest possible consensus.

5. New security threats and challenges have now risen to the forefront of the international agenda, which has increased the need to strengthen joint efforts to combat terrorism in all its manifestations and the importance of addressing international and regional security issues. The SCO member States will focus their efforts on implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the provisions of the SCO Counter-Terrorism Convention. They will also focus on countering terrorist and extremist ideology by promoting an intercivilizational and intercultural dialogue.

6. The SCO member States emphasize that the Organization must remain focused on strengthening the coordination of joint activities to end the world financial and economic crisis and to reduce its negative consequences. In order to overcome the crisis, consistent efforts should be made to modernize national economies and to place them on an innovative path, all countries concerned should be equally involved in the international decision-making process, and cooperation at the global and regional levels should be strengthened towards those ends.

- The Organization will undertake efforts to create conditions conducive to trading and investment activities and the implementation of joint regional and interregional projects for the development of transport and communications infrastructure, with a view to increasing the economic competitiveness of member States.

7. In the modern world, it is crucial to build a system of international security based on respect for international law and compliance by States with their obligations. The establishment of such a system requires coherent and effective disarmament and non-proliferation measures.

- The SCO member States call for strict observance of the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including the provisions on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They believe that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, an important element for ensuring regional peace and security, could make a significant contribution towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and enhancing the level of regional and international security. An effective step in that direction would be the signature by the nuclear Powers of the relevant Protocol to the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

- The SCO member States welcome the signing in Prague on 8 April 2010 of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

- The member States stress that the uncontrolled deployment of global anti-ballistic missile defence systems, alongside the danger of weapons being deployed in outer space, could destabilize the international situation and lead to a proliferation of, and an increase in, missiles in various regions of the world.

8. The continuing escalation of the confrontation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime originating from that country remain a serious source of regional insecurity. The achievement of peace and stability in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is crucial for ensuring security that promotes sustainable socio-economic development in the entire region.

- The SCO member States reaffirm the leading role of the United Nations in coordinating the international community's efforts to achieve a solution to the situation in Afghanistan. They consider that the situation in Afghanistan cannot be settled by military methods alone and support advancing the negotiation process under United Nations auspices with the participation of Afghans themselves.

- The Organization, which supports the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as a peaceful and stable country, believes in the importance of fully respecting the rich historical and ethno-demographic roots of the multi-ethnic people of Afghanistan and their traditional and religious values.

- The Organization supports the efforts of member States participating in projects for the economic reconstruction of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in cooperation with international institutions and other interested parties.

- The SCO member States call upon the international community to intensify its efforts to combat the drug threat from Afghanistan at all levels of the drug production and distribution chain. In this context, the summit meeting participants express their readiness to cooperate with other international and regional bodies and call upon the International Security Assistance Force to cooperate with the SCO member States on counter-narcotics efforts.

9. The SCO member States note that information security is closely linked to State sovereignty, national security, socio-economic stability and the interests of citizens. All countries are entitled to exercise control over the Internet, in accordance with their domestic situations and laws, while also expanding cooperation in a spirit of equality and mutual respect.

- Information technologies should be used for the purposes of peace, development, security and prosperity. The member States will continue to implement SCO instruments on security signed in this sphere and will undertake active efforts to ensure international information security.

10. The SCO member States note the increasing role played by the Organization in establishing a partnership network of multilateral entities in the Asia-Pacific region, in the context of strengthening peace, stability and sustainable development under the 2004 "Tashkent Initiative".

- The member States welcome the signature on 5 April 2010 in Tashkent of the Joint Declaration on SCO/United Nations Secretariat Cooperation, which establishes the main principles and areas for cooperation between the two organizations.

11. The approval by Heads of State of SCO rules of procedure and regulations on the procedure for admitting new members to the Organization represents as an important step in ensuring its further development, enhancing its authority and improving the legal framework for the work of its bodies.

- The member States advocate further intensifying cooperation with SCO observer States and dialogue partners and support strengthening practical cooperation with a view to incorporating their capacities, resources and markets in joint activities.

12. The sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War is being widely commemorated in SCO member States and around the world. The SCO member States emphasize that the lessons of that war reaffirm the importance, even today, that all States and political leaders must be committed to preventing the further tragedy of mass human casualties and that, through their joint efforts, they must work together to effectively counter threats and challenges to humanity. The SCO member States, whose peoples made a major contribution to the achievement of victory and suffered heavy losses during the Second World War, strongly condemn attempts to revive fascist ideology and to spread xenophobia, intolerance, extremism and terrorism for sinister political purposes.

- The Organization will continue upholding its commitment to peace, joint development and equal cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and tolerance, expanding cooperation and dialogue with the international community and making every effort to strengthen security, stability and well-being in the region and in the world as a whole, for the sake of harmony and shared prosperity.

- The SCO member States reaffirm their intention to hold commemorative events next year to mark the tenth anniversary of the Organization.

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Sixty-fifth session
Item 69 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Secretary-General submits the present report in response to General Assembly resolution 64/160, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek further the views of Member States and relevant agencies of the United Nations system on the issue of globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights, and to submit a substantive report on the subject to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. The report summarizes views received from the Governments of Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Guatemala, Mauritius, Mexico, Oman, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Spain, as well as from the United Nations Development Programme, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization, and provides recommendations on ways to address the impact of globalization on the full enjoyment of all human rights.

* A/65/150.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 64/160, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General on globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (A/64/265) and requested the Secretary-General to seek further the views of Member States and relevant agencies of the United Nations system and to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a substantive report on the subject based on these views, including recommendations on ways to address the impact of globalization on the full enjoyment of human rights.

2. On 13 April 2010, pursuant to that request, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) sent a request for views on the issue. As at 12 July 2010, OHCHR had received responses from the Governments of Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Guatemala, Mauritius, Mexico, Oman, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Spain, and from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

II. Replies received from Governments

Azerbaijan

[Original: English]
[6 July 2010]

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan stated its commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by implementing various projects. The Government put in place the State programme on poverty reduction and economic development for 2003-2005 to achieve the goal of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger. The implementation of this programme led to the maintenance of overall macroeconomic stability, acceptable levels of inflation and exchange rates and dynamic economic growth. Consequently, the poverty level decreased from 46.7 per cent in 2002 to 29.3 per cent in 2005.

In order to continue the positive process of improving the population's welfare and further reducing poverty, the State programme on poverty reduction and sustainable development for 2008-2015 was adopted. The strategic aims of this programme include, among others, sustainable economic growth, broadened income opportunities and the alleviation of poverty; the development of an efficient social protection system; improved living conditions for refugees and internally displaced persons; and equal access to education and health systems. The programme resulted in an increase by 24.6 per cent in budget allocations for social protection and social assistance in 2009.

Azerbaijan referred to the 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons in the country, who make up 12 per cent of the population, and stated that poverty risks among this group were relatively high, since the majority had worked in the agriculture sector and currently faced serious problems with employment. Since 2001, the Government has taken measures to build new settlements and has allocated plots of land for refugees and internally displaced persons, and continues its commitment to improving social protection and reducing poverty.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

[Original: English]
[2 July 2010]

Bosnia and Herzegovina stated that globalization leads to the intensification of social and economic relations across borders, resulting in a more powerful and wider interweaving of global and local processes. Economic globalization encourages discrimination and inequality, leading to a gap between the rich and the poor. Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed out that globalization based on the current global economic model has resulted in the deterioration of economic, social and cultural conditions under which the most vulnerable social groups live, thereby contributing to the growth of poverty and social exclusion. Poverty reduces the ability to enjoy human rights, in particular, the rights to work, to an adequate standard of living, and to housing, food, health and education, and creates marginalized groups and individuals. Therefore, the number of those who can enjoy the positive elements of globalization is smaller.

In order to reduce social exclusion, Bosnia and Herzegovina started the development and adoption of the social inclusion strategy, which will define policies and measures to improve employment and social protection for, and increase the economic and social integration of vulnerable groups. In 2009, Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a law prohibiting discrimination, in order to protect the human rights of its citizens.

With respect to the environment, Bosnia and Herzegovina is implementing a project with UNDP, which aims at achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sheds light on the relationship between the environment and poverty. Capacity development for better environmental management contributes to poverty reduction and social exclusion. As for education, Bosnia and Herzegovina started a reform with the objective of improving the quality of education at all stages, with special emphasis on the situation of ethnic minorities, returnee students and students in the war-affected regions and rural areas. Moreover, human rights education is integrated in the curricula and forms an integral part of educational standards in primary and secondary schools. Bosnia and Herzegovina also adopted new laws on health care and insurance to reform the health system.

Burkina Faso

[Original: French]
[8 July 2010]

The Government of Burkina Faso stated that globalization was likely to jeopardize the full realization of human rights, if no action was taken to address the issue. The intensification of economic and sociocultural exchanges and rampant industrialization had generated a certain level of economic growth. Nevertheless, the fruits of growth are unequally shared, which leads to a widening of the social divide and tensions that might degenerate into conflicts. Moreover, globalization is at the root of various pernicious effects on human rights, such as an increase in arms-, drugs-, diamonds- and human-trafficking; the development of child pornography; the cultural domination of big powers; environmental pollution; and terrorism.

Discussing the issue of development is of no use when human rights are sacrificed in favour of economic growth. The right to development formulates the conditions without which civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights remain illusory and ineffective. The financial and economic crisis proved that a blind search for an economic boom can ruin years of work in the field of human rights.

Burkina Faso recommended two major orientations that could be put into action. The first is the recognition of human rights norms and principles as the essential legal framework of globalization. The second relates to the extension of the concept of accountability to non-State actors, including transnational corporations and non-governmental organizations, whose activities sometimes have negative effects and are reflected on the global scale.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[9 June 2010]

The Government of Colombia stressed that the construction of a more equitable society had been one of the cornerstones of development policies in the country. As a consequence of the economic crisis of the late 1990s, Colombia saw the need to implement policies that would contribute to an equitable and inclusive society. Since 2002, the Government has aimed to increase the efficiency and better targeting of social expenditure so that resources reach those who need them the most, and to consolidate a social protection system.

In its reply, Colombia referred to the support extended to individuals and communities affected by poverty, drug trafficking and violence through the implementation of a strategy of international cooperation that brings together institutional capacity and solidarity with international actors. The State aims at guaranteeing the effective enjoyment of rights for all displaced persons and victims of violence. Colombia determined the main problems tied to globalization to be the continuation of violence and displacement; the increase in poverty and vulnerability; and environmental and climate change.

With respect to the continuation of violence and displacement, Colombia stated that the forced displacement and violation of the rights of the civilian population resulting from violence were partly fuelled by certain phenomena of the global order, such as trafficking in drugs and illegal arms and the cooperation between illegal armed groups from various regions of the world. To such factors, domestic socio-political conditions of exclusion, inequality and poverty, determined by local and global dynamics, are added. In recognition of this situation, Colombia adopted a series of measures, which were explained in detail in its reply. These measures aimed at reintegrating the displaced into society, mitigating the effects of violence and providing support and reparation to victims of violence and to the displaced for the restoration of their infringed rights.

With regard to the increase in poverty and vulnerability, Colombia's reply summarizes the strategies implemented to fight against these phenomena and their impact on displaced persons and the poor. These policies were maintained and strengthened during the recent global economic crisis, generating a counter-cyclical

social policy. Colombia noted the progress made in poverty reduction, health, education and employment, which shows the success of social programmes.

On the environment and climate change, Colombia referred to various national and international factors negatively affecting biodiversity, and specifically underlined illegal crop planting. The reply by Colombia provides details of the strategies to combat illegal crop planting at the national level. Colombia stated that this phenomenon also needed to be dealt with globally.

Recognizing that the needs of the country require both global and national solutions, Colombia seeks to mobilize efforts for international cooperation, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, the fight against drugs, environmental protection, reconciliation and governance. The actions envisaged within the framework of international cooperation include, among others, the strengthening of the social role of the State, the rule of law and human rights; development and peace initiatives; and the reintegration of displaced persons based on their human rights.

Guatemala

[Original: Spanish]
[5 July 2010]

The Government of Guatemala provided detailed information in its reply on policies adopted at both the national and regional levels to create an environment favourable for development and poverty eradication, by means of strategic alliances that promote equitable and ecologically sustainable economic growth. Measures taken at the national level include strategies addressing poverty and chronic malnutrition. The share of social expenditure in public spending increased between 1999 and 2009.

Within the framework of combating poverty and chronic malnutrition, the Government elaborated a social development policy, with a social cohesion strategy aiming at inter-institutional coordination to facilitate State interventions based on geographic and thematic priorities. Geographic priorities are determined according to the level of extreme poverty in municipalities identified in poverty maps. Thematic priorities are identified based on indicators of the social well-being of society, such as, health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation. The main purpose is to achieve a more equitable and inclusive society. While recognizing economic growth as an essential condition in combating poverty, Guatemala stated that poverty eradication depended not only on adequate national macroeconomic policies, but also on global policies through multilateral trading rules and capital flows.

With respect to food security, Guatemala provided information in its reply on the organizational system composed of institutions responsible for guaranteeing food security and agricultural production in the country. This system is also supported by civil society organizations, private initiatives and international cooperation agencies. The national strategy aims to reduce and break the intergenerational circle of chronic malnutrition that affects half of the population. During the food crisis in 2008-2009, complementary nutrition was provided to families with one or more cases of acute malnutrition. The same level of emergency service has been maintained for the year 2010.

Guatemala underlined the importance of regional integration to deal with issues, such as combating poverty, food security, the environment, the economy, migration and natural disasters. Such integration constitutes a development model to overcome the effects of the global economic crisis, by promoting trade; the free movement of goods, services and persons; foreign direct investment; and the growth of small and medium enterprises, which favour more investment and generate employment.

Guatemala highlighted that it was fundamental for the State to support its fellow citizens abroad. Particular attention is given to defending the rights of those who are vulnerable due to the lack of a valid immigration status. In this context, the consulates of Guatemala in certain countries offer free videoconference services that facilitate communication between migrants and their relatives in Guatemala. Another good practice is the assistance provided to Guatemalan migrants who are detained abroad, for various reasons, with regard to legal consultancy and defence.

Mauritius

[Original: English]
[25 June 2010]

The Government of Mauritius stated that it had a strong record of human development, with a human development index of 0.800 according to the Human Development Report 2009. Mauritius had made significant progress towards most of the Millennium Development Goals. The Government provides free and compulsory primary education and universal health care. The proportion of people living in extreme poverty is estimated to be less than 1 per cent, based on household budget surveys and the one dollar a day poverty line of the World Bank. The reply received from Mauritius provides information on the programmes currently being implemented to eradicate poverty and increase opportunities for the poor. A special committee for the eradication of absolute poverty has been set up, which comprises all stakeholders, namely, the public sector, private sector and non-governmental organizations, to look into the specific needs of the poor, provide urgent assistance and lend support to children and the unemployed. Mauritius noted that the private sector was expected to cover 30 per cent of the cost as part of a corporate social responsibility programme.

Mauritius highlighted that one of the most successful achievements regarding the Millennium Development Goals was in the area of universal primary education. This target was attained with an enrolment ratio of nearly 100 per cent in primary education and a literacy rate estimated at 95 per cent for those aged between 15 and 24 years. Mauritius explained that the key driving factors for success included enabling legislation, favourable policy initiatives, budgetary support and infrastructural facilities. The Education Act of 1993 provides that parents have to compulsorily send their children to primary school, failing which they are liable to a fine and imprisonment. From January 2005 onwards, education had become free and compulsory for all up to the age of 16, with the introduction of 11 years of compulsory schooling. The increase in infrastructure facilities and other measures increased access to schools. Moreover, the eradication of absolute poverty programme ensures that all poor children of pre-primary schoolgoing age attend school and are provided with a decent lunch, and their parents are trained to find a

decent job with sustainable income. Notwithstanding the significant progress, the primary education system has certain deficiencies, such as a high dropout rate, a limited curriculum, and the use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction.

As for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, Mauritius noted that there was no gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education. However, the share of women in paid employment in the non-agricultural sector (36.7 per cent in 2008) and the proportion of seats held by women in Parliament (17.1 per cent in 2009) are still relatively low. Mauritius expressed its concern that the female unemployment rate, which was 12.3 per cent in 2009, is three times higher than that of the male unemployment rate, which was 4.4 per cent in 2009. The economic empowerment programme aims to widen opportunities for women and increase their participation in socio-economic activities.

The reply provided by Mauritius refers to the challenges faced under other aspects of the Millennium Development Goals, such as reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and achieving environmental sustainability. Concerning the latter, the proportion of land area covered by forests has decreased from 30 per cent in 2000 to 25 per cent in 2008. With respect to combating HIV/AIDS, the prevalence rate increased during the period 2000-2009. The Government treats HIV/AIDS as a priority issue and undertakes preventive measures and sensitization campaigns to protect the population at large, with special emphasis on vulnerable groups. Other challenges include the increase in budget deficits and debt due to the financial crisis. A tight fiscal policy to tackle already high public debt would put a strain on public expenditure. Such developments should be guarded against as they may further delay progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Mauritius stated that the inherent constraints of being a small island developing State consisted of limited resources, remoteness, small domestic markets and vulnerability to natural disasters. Global shocks such as the food, energy and financial crises have substantially hit the small island developing States. To overcome these challenges, Mauritius suggested the design and introduction of new innovative financing instruments and called upon the international development institutions and international community to be more forthcoming in assisting small island developing States in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and better integrate into the global economy. A "one-size-fits-all" approach to development challenges would further marginalize small island developing States, which deserve special treatment and need to be recognized as a group of countries having specificities of their own.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[25 June 2010]

The Government of Mexico stressed that complete openness to international scrutiny, full involvement in the international system of human rights and cooperation with both regional and universal mechanisms had been translated into an invaluable tool to impose internal structural changes. Globalization had the potential to raise income levels in all countries and contribute to the construction of fairer and more equitable societies. However, its benefits had been distributed unequally. The lack of coherence between international trade and financial systems

and between national development strategies and international obligations had contributed to this outcome. The current challenge confronting the international community was to ensure that globalization benefited all and turned into a source of wealth for all. Global prosperity and stability could only be achieved by means of a stronger and more equitable global economy so that developing economies became more resilient and less vulnerable to economic recessions. Mexico pointed out that globalization should be a fair, inclusive and democratically governed process involving a strong social dimension based on universally shared values and respect for human rights and the dignity of all persons.

The reply received from Mexico summarized the social policies implemented to combat poverty and hunger, enhance development of capacities and improve the living standards of the population most in need through equality of opportunity. The achievements in this context had been possible thanks to economic stability, institutional strength and democracy, on the one hand, and the impact of public policies based on sustainable development, on the other. On the international financial and economic crisis, Mexico emphasized the need for regulation and supervision of the main financial centres, instruments and agents, as well as the guarantee that all fiscal jurisdictions and financial centres comply with transparency and regulatory norms. Mexico referred to the measures taken to stimulate economic growth and competitiveness, boost credit growth and guarantee sufficient functioning of financial markets. As for financing for development, Mexico referred to the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, which had made an urgent call to maintain the commitments for development aid despite global economic uncertainty, and to formulate measures for the integral, effective and timely implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

Mexico stated that food security was a priority for the international agenda and expressed its disagreement with the concept of food sovereignty. The use of food sovereignty might generate controversy amongst countries, due to the fact that the concept entailed the idea of controlling exports to guarantee domestic supply in view of the global food crisis. The international community had the responsibility to ensure and facilitate access to food at affordable prices within the framework of free trade.

Mexico stated that it gave priority to regional cooperation. There was also a need for complementarity and cooperation among international and regional organizations to avoid the duplication of work and diversion of resources. Mexico stressed the importance of coherence across the international system in making a major impact in developing countries.

Oman

[Original: Arabic]
[1 June 2010]

The Sultanate of Oman stated that the theoretical framework of globalization called for a world without borders and increases in exchanges at the global level. The widespread market economy model involved the free movement of goods, services and capital, on the one hand, and intellectual property protection, on the other. The latter might be an obstacle for technology transfer to developing countries. Oman stressed that the current international economic order was neither equitable nor balanced. Nevertheless, civil and political rights had been strengthened in the era of

globalization, mainly owing to the advancement in information and communications technology. The global network of non-governmental organizations promoting human rights had led to the creation of a global civil society. Oman emphasized the importance of the right to enjoy one's culture, language and religion. In this context, attention was drawn to the imbalance between the capacities of countries to produce and disseminate their culture, which may be considered as a threat to national cultural identity, thereby preventing the enjoyment of cultural rights.

Referring to widespread poverty, the Sultanate highlighted that despite the benefits expected from globalization, development processes failed to deliver outcomes in developing countries. In the view of Oman, globalization subjected human values and rights to market exigencies and contributed to the deterioration of public health systems, the increase in unemployment, the privatization of public and common goods, the exploitation of women, the expansion of export-oriented agricultural production at the expense of local needs, the promotion of genetically modified organisms and led to labour market reforms that usually diminished job security and social protection.

In order to mitigate the adverse effects of globalization on human rights, Oman called for the international community to promote and protect human rights, while recognizing cultural diversity and encouraging tolerance among cultures. Coherence between national and international approaches to the creation of an environment conducive to development should be ensured to achieve economic and social development. Oman stressed the importance of appropriate strategies to combat poverty and hunger, to ensure equitable income distribution, free access to education and health, the prevention of the exploitation of women and the protection of their rights, and the preservation of moral values. The Sultanate pointed to the need to review and question the current international system to ensure respect for the interests of all. Oman concluded that a new approach to human rights had become necessary in the light of the global challenges posed by actions of both State and non-State actors.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[17 June 2010]

The contribution of Qatar reflects the views of the National Human Rights Committee, which is the competent authority for human rights issues. The Committee referred to the exclusiveness of the global decision-making processes and its impact on the enjoyment of human rights, poverty reduction, social structures and national identities. The Committee stated that the negative impacts of globalization on the enjoyment of human rights could be seen in various areas. One such effect relates to the activities of those transnational corporations that seek low-cost labour throughout the globe, without ensuring decent working conditions, including the use of child labour. The recent financial crisis, which had occurred as a consequence of economic globalization related to the banking systems, as well as trade and capital flows, had hampered development efforts and thus severely affected the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly poverty eradication. The Committee stated further that the unequal distribution of the benefits of globalization, at both local and international levels, had contributed to

the emergence of extremist groups. Social and cultural globalization had also had a negative impact on local cultural identity, by spreading different consumption patterns at the expense of domestic moral values, particularly among the younger generation.

The Committee suggested that, in the economic context, it was essential to enable developing countries to better take advantage of their human resources, particularly the young population, through the promotion of poverty eradication programmes at the local, national and global levels. Moreover, there is a need to review the ethical principles relating to the regulation of the banking system. The Committee emphasized the significance of policies that ensure investment in the agricultural sector in developing countries as an alternative to investment in the construction industry. It encouraged the establishment of trade unions and workers' organizations in countries where they are still non-existent. There was a need to change consumption patterns, particularly in petroleum producing countries, through progressive taxation targeting specific goods in accordance with health and environmental standards.

In the political context, the Committee stressed that advocacy for a democratic approach would require respect for all human rights, including the right of all peoples to full sovereignty over their natural resources, and highlighted the principles of integrity, impartiality and objectivity within the United Nations system. In the social context, the Committee stressed the need for an effective civil society, in developing countries, to counteract the negative impacts of globalization. It also underlined the need for reform of national legislations to ensure social justice.

With respect to the cultural context, the Committee stressed the importance of national languages in tackling the negative effects of globalization on local cultures. In this context, the integration of national languages in all education phases is crucial. The National Human Rights Committee underscored the significance of the full observance of the freedom of opinion and expression in preventing the cultural dominance of certain groups over others.

Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]
[20 May 2010]

The Government of the Russian Federation stated that one of the negative effects of globalization was the growth in economic and social inequalities and the deepening divide between countries, based on the level of development, resulting in extreme poverty. This often led to an upsurge in intolerance and to demands for a more just division of resources between developed and developing States. Extreme poverty represented a serious threat to human rights. The Russian Federation had made coordinated efforts to reduce poverty both within and outside the country. At the national level, measures had been taken to increase the funding for social development, incomes and the effectiveness of State assistance to those in need, and to improve the pension system.

Besides its advantages, globalization also had disadvantages, one of which was the global dimension of market fluctuations that previously remained within national frontiers. The recent food price hikes was a good example. The increase in food prices may have negatively affected economic development, security and

respect for human rights on the global scale. In this respect, the Russian Federation referred to the threat of "hungry globalization" and highlighted the need to make globalization more controlled and thus more just.

The Russian Federation stated that globalization had resulted in the strengthening of the influence, within States and in the international arena, of large non-State actors, namely, global networks, transnational corporations, associations and groups, including those engaged in terror. The Russian Federation pointed out that there were currently a tendency towards the development of non-State actors as independent participants in international relations who, in many cases, were assuming functions that were previously the exclusive preserve of the State. Non-State actors, including transnational corporations, were not held accountable to States and their people, especially if States, where the non-State actors operated, were not capable of preventing unlawful activities, due to various factors, such as economic and financial weakness or corruption. In such cases, it was possible to talk about the erosion of State sovereignty and the impossibility of invoking the effective protection of existing human rights standards. In this context, the operations of non-State actors may lead to large-scale human rights violations. The Russian Federation emphasized the need to further elaborate on the question of the transfer of State functions to non-State actors, and of the recognition of liability by non-State actors for human rights violations they committed.

The Russian Federation stated that globalization facilitated the interaction between different cultures and noted that cultural diversity should be respected as a condition of human dignity, while promoting and protecting human rights. The interaction between cultures should not be replaced by the imposition of a unique system of values. The Russian Federation stressed that one way to achieve universal respect for human rights was a more profound understanding of the traditional values of mankind.

Serbia

[Original: English]
[22 June 2010]

Serbia stated that poverty and social exclusion were among the greatest challenges faced by the country. These problems had reversed all efforts for social developments, as the benefits were not shared equally by all. To respond to these challenges, Serbia had adopted the national strategy on sustainable development, which aimed at establishing a balance between the three key factors, namely, sustainable economic and technological development, sustainable social development and environmental protection accompanied by the rational use of natural resources.

The strategic objectives of Serbia in the field of human and minority rights and gender equality included the harmonization of the national legislation with European standards and the establishment of institutional mechanisms for exercising guaranteed rights; the balancing and equalization of the socio-economic standards of living of certain minority communities, primarily the Roma community, with that of the majority Serbian population; the achievement of a proportional participation by members of minorities in the judiciary, prosecutors' offices, police, army and local self-government; the reduction of the social distance between minorities and the majority Serbian population; and the improvement of the situation of persons with disabilities.

With respect to human rights, Serbia stressed its commitment to continuing the reform processes and clearly defining competencies for the implementation of obligations resulting from international conventions and standards. It further emphasized the need to develop a system of efficient reporting and supervision over the implementation of measures in the area of minority and human rights.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[11 June 2010]

Spain expressed its concern about the negative effects of growing global difficulties in the area of food and energy, as well as the effect of climate change on economic and social development and on the full enjoyment of all human rights by all. Spain underlined national awareness of the risks entailed by climate change, and consequently, of the responsibility, shared with the rest of the international community, of maintaining living conditions throughout the planet. Responsibility in this field could only be assumed by way of global decision-making, given the global dimension of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, any initiative should be compatible with the legitimate aspirations of the poorest to improve the conditions of their well-being, and with the right to development. Spain referred to the close link between the fight against climate change and the possibility of reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Only through adequate policies addressing global warming could progress be made towards the achievement of other objectives, such as universal access to energy or drinking water. Spain emphasized its full support for the reference, in General Assembly resolution 64/160, to concerns about the consequences of climate change and to the need to promote equitable and environmentally sustainable economic growth.

III. Replies received from United Nations organizations

United Nations Development Programme

3. Human development, with its focus on the expansion and use of institutional and human capabilities, provided the essential context for the work of UNDP towards making globalization work for people and their enjoyment of all human rights. A particularly significant characteristic of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is reflected in the UNDP vision. Civil and political rights are as critical for the dignity of life as are economic, social and cultural rights. Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, which involves not only income deprivation but also lack of access to services, including education and health care. When human development and human rights advance together, they reinforce one another, expanding people's capabilities and protecting their rights and fundamental freedoms.

4. UNDP welcomed the reaffirmation in General Assembly resolution 64/160, of the commitment to creating an environment conducive to development and poverty elimination at both the national and global levels. This commitment was reflected in UNDP activities in a number of areas, inter alia, governance, inclusive development, inclusive globalization, access to energy and enhanced capacities to cope with

climate change, and migration and development, with the view to promoting fair globalization, sustainable development and democratized global economic governance.

5. As for democratic governance, human rights formed the backdrop of the UNDP governance programme, which drew attention to accountability for the delivery of development benefits to all people and lends legal and moral legitimacy, as well as a sense of social justice, to human development objectives. This mandate was further legitimized by the commitment of Governments to internationally agreed norms, such as the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development and the Millennium Declaration, which implicitly referred to democracy and good governance. A democratic governance approach fosters participation and accountability focusing on the rights and needs of the most deprived and marginalized.

6. UNDP implemented its human rights for development approach in over 100 countries by providing policy advice, technical support, capacity development and knowledge management. The Programme supported countries' efforts to integrate human rights principles, such as non-discrimination, participation and accountability, into poverty and development frameworks and to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights. Within the framework of its inclusive development approach, it ensured the engagement of indigenous peoples and the strengthening of the role of marginalized minorities in development. UNDP supported civil society in monitoring public policies and programmes. Its work in democratic governance further included strengthening national capacities and institutions to implement anti-corruption initiatives. UNDP promoted accessible, fair and informal justice systems for all, with a focus on enabling the poor and marginalized to seek and obtain remedies.

7. On inclusive globalization, UNDP supported the efforts of developing countries to leverage the potential of globalization to fight poverty and improve the standard of living. While globalization had the potential to advance human development by creating jobs and by enabling developing countries to access new technologies, it had not increased incomes as quickly as had been expected, in the majority of developing countries. In particular, vulnerabilities were uncovered by the recent global economic and financial crisis. To maximize the benefits of globalization, UNDP worked to enhance understanding of how developing countries are affected by the policies of the international community in areas such as financial resource flows and international trade. This included strengthening capacities to negotiate and manage development finance and increasing competitiveness and human development benefits of trade.

8. In this respect, UNDP encouraged trade capacity-building, by supporting country programmes and working closely with developing countries, development partners, agencies and international financial institutions, including regional banks, in the Aid for Trade Initiative and the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries. UNDP also conducted country-specific and global policy-related research on ways of improving access to sustainable finance for development as well as on debt sustainability and innovative financing.

9. UNDP continued its efforts to engage the private sector as an active partner for human development. The Programme was a key partner in the United Nations Global Compact. It supported and facilitated local Global Compact country networks

that brought together local businesses with civil society, academia and Governments to discuss concerns related to human rights, the environment, labour standards, anti-corruption measures and development. UNDP hosted the secretariat of the "Business Call to Action" and supported the development of inclusive markets.

10. The impacts of climate change threaten a range of human rights, such as the right to water and food. Poor households are the most vulnerable, as they are the least able to recover from climate stresses. Furthermore, their economic growth is highly dependent on climate-sensitive sectors. As regards linkages between gender and climate change, many poor communities depend on women for food production, who may have to walk further to collect food and water, build embankments to prevent flooding and take on more non-agricultural work to mitigate and adapt to climate risks. These trade-offs reinforce wider inequalities in economic and social advancement.

11. Access to reliable modern energy services directly affects incomes, gender equality, health, education and environmental sustainability. Energy consumption patterns, in terms of access, both qualitatively and quantitatively, are highly disproportionate on either side of the development divide — North and South, rich and poor, urban and rural, men and women. In this area, UNDP had been leading efforts to expand access to 1.5 billion people who lived without electricity and 3 billion people who still relied on traditional biomass and coal. Disproportionate access to modern energy services restrained human development directly or indirectly, leading to deprivation of human rights, such as the rights to food, health, shelter and decent working conditions, and bore particular implications for women and children. Over 2 million people, mainly women and children, succumb to premature death annually owing to indoor air pollution related to the use of solid biomass for cooking and heating. UNDP responded to these challenges by mainstreaming energy access in development strategies, mobilizing financing and strengthening service delivery.

12. On migration and development, the Programme worked towards the establishment of a basic framework of advisory support for Governments willing to respond to migration in the context of their national development strategies. UNDP also led efforts in the implementation of the European Commission-United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative, in partnership with other United Nations agencies and international organizations, which supported cooperation between private and public stakeholders and the capacity development of civil society and local institutions.

World Intellectual Property Organization

13. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) provided information on the activities it had undertaken with the view to promoting fair globalization and sustainable development. WIPO expressed its commitment to ensuring that all countries benefit from intellectual property in their economic, social and cultural development. One of the strategic objectives for WIPO is the empowerment of developing countries and the least developed countries in using the intellectual property system in an informed and effective way. This requires responding to the challenges of intellectual property policy coherence with areas as diverse as innovation promotion, market regulation, health, trade, environment, food security

and access to knowledge; creating appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks; technical infrastructure; and providing human capacity to participate in the growing collaboration in knowledge production and use.

14. In the general framework of facilitating the use of intellectual property for development, WIPO technical assistance activities focused on: (a) the development of national intellectual and innovation strategies, a cross-disciplinary package of policy elements and recommended action plans to boost innovation performance; (b) assistance in establishing development-oriented regulatory frameworks in the form of legislation and policy; (c) developing institutional and technical infrastructure; and (d) capacity-building. In this context, WIPO has been providing legal advice, undertaking advisory and outreach missions on intellectual property laws and organizing national, regional and international seminars and workshops on flexibilities and public policies in the patent field.

15. In the area of innovation and technology transfer, WIPO technical assistance and capacity-building work is based on a practical application of intellectual property systems to economic and social development. This work included technical assistance in conducting national intellectual property audits within the framework of national development objectives; technical advice and capacity-building in the establishment and enhancement of intellectual property management and innovation support infrastructure; and professional training.

16. The Development Agenda for WIPO was an important initiative, which promised to remove the impediments in the use of the intellectual property system and had the potential to introduce significant changes by integrating the development dimension into the system, which could then fulfil its role as a catalyst for improvements in innovation, creativity and technology transfer. The recommendations of the Development Agenda consisted of various elements, including human rights dimensions. In implementing those recommendations, WIPO had taken a project-based approach. Several projects approved by Member States were intended to serve as a catalyst to development through capacity-building in the use of appropriate technology-specific information and developing tools for access to patent information in developing countries and least developed countries.

17. At the core of the Millennium Development Goals proclamation are issues related to sustainable development and the respect for and promotion of human rights. Human rights therefore, had become intrinsically linked to the attainment of economic, social and cultural development. Access to medicines and achieving Goals 4, 5, 6 and 8 were at the core of the development-oriented intellectual property system that WIPO strove to foster. The intellectual property system, particularly the patent system, could play a positive role in reducing the cost of essential drugs and providing the technical base for countries to produce their own much needed medications.

18. Various recommendations of the Development Agenda addressed the issue of national and regional capacities to deal with public policy concerns such as public health within the framework of the intellectual property system, especially patents. WIPO initiatives in this field allowed countries to gain access to millions of scientific and technical data, which can assist in the formulation of proper and all-encompassing public health policies and programmes.

19. WIPO was an active contributor to the international policy debate on intellectual property and public health and in facilitating the exchange of factual data and experiences and policy inputs through cooperation with international organizations, such as the World Health Organization, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and with regional and national organizations, as well as with non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia. This was an important aspect of access to medicines and encouraged open innovation systems in public health. This had included active engagement with the World Health Organization on the development and implementation of the Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property.

20. On climate change, WIPO worked to facilitate the transfer of and access to appropriate technologies related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. WIPO was engaged in a number of global policy forums geared towards finding ways in which intellectual property could be used to accelerate investment in innovative solutions and their transfer and diffusion.

World Trade Organization

21. The World Trade Organization (WTO) stressed transparency, coherence and equity as the driving forces behind the multilateral trading system, as they were in the human rights mechanisms. Opening international trade could lead to growth and development, creating efficiency for raising standards of living, and thereby contribute to the actual implementation of proclaimed rights. This presupposed that existing rules were global, just and reflective of all that adhered to them. The set of rules and agreements that collectively formed the current multilateral trading system did not fully adhere to the aforementioned condition, nor did it entirely reflect the changing composition and demands that WTO faced in today's globalized world. The need for review and change continued to be the most important reasons for which WTO membership had launched the Doha Round of negotiations in 2001. The strongest drivers of that conviction were the changing economic, social and environmental circumstances and a shared need to address the development and poverty challenges dominating the international agenda.

22. In 2001, WTO member States had been determined to maintain the process of reform and liberalization of trade policies, to continue to ensure that the system played its full part in promoting recovery, growth and development. They had sought to place the needs and interests of developing countries and least developed countries at the heart of the WTO system and to adapt and reform the multilateral trading system and functions so that the majority of its membership secured a larger share in the growth of world trade, resonating with their economic and development needs.

23. That change in direction was reflected in the daily operations of WTO, as well as in the negotiating positions of its members. Providing guaranteed market access, reforming the rules in favour of developing countries and building demand-driven and sustainable technical assistance and capacity-building programmes were examples of the central role that development played in the operations of WTO. Much work was still needed to advance the position of poorer countries and this was clearly reflected in Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals, making WTO and

the trading system it represented an integral part of a global partnership much needed for development.

24. The economic and financial crisis continued to be a threat for the longer term stability of the trading system. The much-awaited successful conclusion of Doha negotiations was all the harder to achieve when economic uncertainty still reigned. Given the explicit negative impact of the crisis on poorer economies, the international community needed to act together to help least developed countries find the margin of comfort to absorb that impact. Many developing countries did not have the means for fiscal stimulus packages to reboot their economies, nor did they have the resources to subsidize their agriculture or business communities in weathering the crisis. The crisis had also affected the availability of liquidity and subsequent supply of trade credit at sufficient amounts and affordable rates. There was still need to address the trade financing gap, while more needed to be done to establish stable long-term productive capacity and infrastructural networks in developing countries.

25. Over the years, trade openness had contributed considerably to enhancing developing countries' participation in the global economy. Their exports had almost doubled between 2000 and 2008, while world exports had increased by 50 per cent according to WTO secretariat estimates. That steady growth has been jeopardized by the financial and economic crisis, and could only be neutralized if the world economy continued its recovery path and emerged from recession. Trade and investment had an important role to play in anchoring economic recovery in job creation and poverty alleviation. WTO had highlighted the current danger of protectionism and restrictions and stated that countries had resisted the pressure to use trade protectionism and investment restrictions at times of economic downturn. Although the most recent WTO report had revealed that the number and coverage of trade restricting measures was declining, there was a risk of accumulation of measures taken since the outbreak of the crisis, as there appeared to be a relatively slow pace in their removal.

26. Given the identified role of trade and investment in economic recovery and progress, and WTO rules and disciplines safeguarding against protectionism, member States were strongly urged to advance the conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda. Shifting gears from fighting protectionism to making the case for the Doha negotiations was an important step towards an ambitious, balanced and development-oriented conclusion.

27. Aid for Trade was a stimulus that many developing countries and least developed countries needed to remain competitive and to use trade as a tool for poverty reduction. It would help them build up supply-side capacity and strengthen trade-related infrastructure. Assistance provided through Aid for Trade was an important indicator to measure progress in achieving Millennium Development Goal 8. There was a continuous need to build upon the progress made in the regional dimension of Aid for Trade and intensify the work of WTO and its regional partners, including regional development banks, bilateral donors and the private sectors. The third Global Review of Aid for Trade, to be held in 2011, and the conclusion of the Doha Round should contribute to reinvigorating multilateral cooperation. Strengthening the multilateral trading system was an important element of progress towards more efficient global governance and thus, sustainable realization of human rights. Globalization had been and could continue to be a source of welfare creation

as long as the international community stood ready to harness and regulate it by policy and law.

IV. Recommendations

28. International organizations should work towards enhanced policy coherence and coordination in order to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Development strategies should be oriented not only towards economic growth but also more equitable, inclusive and just societies, where the benefits of globalization were shared equally by all.

29. States and development partners should properly identify and address the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable, and avoid policies and discriminatory practices that might further deteriorate their livelihood, and delay progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, especially during times of crises. Well-targeted and sustainable social protection programmes need to be implemented to tackle the adverse effects of recent crises.

30. States, acting both individually and collectively, should work towards creating an environment conducive to development and the equal sharing of benefits and costs when they formulate and implement policies and promote good governance at both the national and global levels.

31. The international community should ensure better and more effective regulation of the global financial system to prevent crises that hamper the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. International financial institutions and States should promote debt sustainability, including through debt alleviation initiatives.

32. States should work towards a development-oriented outcome of the Doha Round of negotiations in order to ensure an open and fairer multilateral trading system, which guarantees respect for human rights.

33. The international community should take into consideration the particularities and vulnerabilities of the least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in the design and implementation of development strategies. In recognition of the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all development model, the international community should support these countries in reaching the Millennium Development Goals and better integrating in the global economy through the implementation of development policies that best address their special needs.

34. All businesses enterprises — national and transnational, large and small — may have an adverse impact on human rights. Coherent and concerted approaches, instead of ad hoc actions by States and firms, are needed to more effectively prevent or address business-related human rights abuses. In this respect, States and businesses are encouraged to observe the principles laid down in the "protect, respect and remedy" framework developed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. This framework can assist all social actors — Governments, companies, and civil society — to reduce the adverse human rights consequences of business activities.

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Item 27 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Social development: United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/154, to transmit to the Assembly the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade.

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Summary

The present report, which follows the reports submitted in 2004 (A/59/267) and 2006 (A/61/151), and the mid-decade review of 2008 (A/63/172), takes as its starting point the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/57/218 and Corr.1). It analyses global and regional literacy trends and presents an assessment of progress in the three priority areas identified through the mid-Decade review, namely: "mobilizing stronger commitment to literacy; reinforcing effective literacy programme delivery; and harnessing new resources for literacy".

The report presents the situations and perspectives of Member States with regard to the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, and documents the impact of the Decade on generating stronger political will, policies and partnerships in favour of literacy, as well as national initiatives, which contribute to the objectives of the Decade. Strategic priorities for the next phase of the Decade and beyond are also outlined.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in fulfilment of the request by the General Assembly, in its resolution 63/154, that UNESCO, as the United Nations agency charged with the coordination of the United Nations Literacy Decade, submit the next progress report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action to the General Assembly in 2010.

2. The report takes as its starting point the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade and presents an assessment of progress in the three priority areas for the remaining years of the Decade identified through the mid-Decade review (General Assembly resolution 63/154) namely, "mobilizing stronger commitment to literacy, reinforcing effective literacy programme delivery and harnessing new resources for literacy".

3. In 2009, on the basis of the outcomes of the mid-decade review, UNESCO undertook a broad consultation with partners in the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector and Member States to develop the International Strategic Framework for Action for the Decade in order to guide efforts through to the end of 2012. Underscoring the links with the Millennium Development Goals, the Framework states that, ultimately each of the Millennium Development Goals implies a learning process and that literacy is a key condition of autonomous learning, and is thus indispensable for the achievement of the Goals. The international profile of literacy was further raised by the publication, in 2008, of *The Global Literacy Challenge: a profile of youth and adult literacy at the mid-point of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012*.

4. The report presents the situations and perspectives of Member States with regard to the implementation of the objectives of the Decade. Data are drawn from specifically prepared country and regional reports, including reports from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education prepared for the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education, the Education for All *Global Monitoring Report 2010* entitled, *Reaching the Marginalized*, the national reports and the synthesis report of the Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All (2010), the 2009 review of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment and UNESCO programme reports.

5. The report also documents national literacy efforts that contribute to the Decade's objectives, while not being directly linked to it.

II. Progress in literacy

A. Key achievements of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2008-2010

6. The key achievements in 2008-2010 relate to the goal of generating stronger political will and greater collective action to promote literacy, giving it a higher profile on the international agendas in education and development. Literacy was highlighted in particular through the following activities.

1. Literacy Initiative for Empowerment

7. The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, coordinated by UNESCO, continues to provide a strategic framework for increased literacy action in the 35 countries where either the literacy rate is less than 50 per cent or where there are more than 10 million non-literate adults. As a key operational mechanism for achieving the goals of the United Nations Literacy Decade, the Initiative serves as a catalyst to strengthen the commitment and capacity of the participating countries for good quality literacy provision and affords a valuable platform for reinforcing South-South cooperation. The Initiative receives significant funding support from the Capacity-building for Education for All Programme run by the Nordic countries.

2. Education for All Global Action Week: April 2009

8. In cooperation with a wide range of civil society partners, in 2009, for the first time, the Global Campaign for Education selected literacy as the theme of the Global Action Week (April 2009), highlighting the need to give much greater attention to the literacy goal of Education for All (Goal 4).[1]

3. Sixth International Conference on Adult Education

9. The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education, held in Belém, Brazil in December 2009 was a key event in raising the profile of literacy. Held once every 12 years, the conference took place within both the Education for All movement (2000-2015) and the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), thus strengthening the role of adult literacy in broader educational efforts. The conference reconfirmed literacy as a right and a foundation for lifelong learning and recognized that Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without first reaching Goal 4. All recommended actions that Member States must implement in order to advance literacy were reflected in the Belém Framework for Action, which was adopted by Member States during the final stage of the conference. For the first time, a *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* was produced (see http://www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/grale/) based on national reports (see http://www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/national-reports/).

4. Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All: June 2010

10. Fifty-four per cent of the world's total population and 67 per cent of the world's non-literate youth and adults live in the nine high-population countries of the global South, the E-9, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan. It was therefore highly significant that the theme for the 2010 meeting of the nine countries was "Literacy for Development". Deliberations covered planning, funding, programme delivery, monitoring and evaluation in the context of South-South cooperation, and the meeting resulted in a forward-looking agenda for the next three years focusing on mutual learning and support in all areas of literacy promotion, to serve as a catalyst for efforts within and beyond the E-9 countries themselves.

11. In addition, the following sections of the report signal significant progress in clearer and stronger national policies and plans in a number of countries, as well as

[1] Reducing adult illiteracy by 50 per cent by 2015.

an indication of higher budgetary allocations. It also adduces evidence of new partnerships and ongoing innovation in the delivery of literacy programmes, with an emphasis on developing capacity to ensure effective implementation and sustainable impact.

B. Literacy rates

12. The analysis of literacy rates, which is based on the statistics supplied by the Education for All *Global Monitoring Report 2010*, is limited to comparing the periods 1985-1994 and 2000-2007, and data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified. Most data are drawn from national censuses or surveys based on self-declaration, not from direct testing of literacy competence (see also paras. 28-34 below).

1. World literacy rates

13. The number of literate adults has been increasing constantly since 1985. The figure of non-literate adults has dropped from 869 million in the period 1985-1994 to 759 million in 2000-2007, a decrease of 13 per cent. Between the two timespans, the global adult literacy rate grew from 76 per cent to 84 per cent. The largest increase was in the developing countries, where there was a change in the adult literacy rate from 68 per cent to 80 per cent. In the previous report to the General Assembly (A/63/172) the global literacy rate was recorded as 83.6 per cent and the absolute number of non-literate adults (over the age of 15) totalled 774 million. In the present report, the global literacy rate is estimated to be almost unchanged, at 84 per cent, while the absolute number has declined to 759 million. These figures indicate that literacy efforts are hardly keeping pace with population growth, let alone making any significant dent in global literacy rates. However, as indicated below, there are large disparities regionally and nationally. While developing countries are concentrating on raising their adult literacy rates, industrialized countries are facing challenges as well. Many adults in industrialized countries have insufficient functional literacy skills, a factor which impedes their access to jobs or their ability to function well in highly literate environments, where the increasingly ubiquitous use of technology demands ever higher levels of literacy.[2]

2. Regional literacy rates

14. Developing countries are home to 752 million non-literate adults. Statistics for the period 2000-2007 show that the highest concentrations are in countries with large populations: 67 per cent of the total number were located in the E-9 countries, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan.

15. Regional disparities remain high (see table 1). The total adult literacy rate ranges from 62 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa to 99 per cent in Central Asia, North America and Western Europe for the period 2000-2007. The greatest increase in literacy rates was observed in South and West Asia (16 per cent) and the Arab States (13 per cent), followed by sub-Saharan Africa (9 per cent). The overall increase in the rate in developing countries was 12 per cent. Latin America and the Caribbean had an increase of only 4 per cent, although the literacy rate already averaged

[2] See *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010*.

87 per cent in the 1985-1994 period. Great differences between literacy rates remain within the region, ranging from 73 per cent in Guatemala to 99 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda and the Cayman Islands. The intra-regional disparities are extremely marked in sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from below 30 per cent (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Niger) to over 90 per cent (Seychelles and Zimbabwe). In South and West Asia the growth in the literacy rate has been especially high in Nepal (24 per cent) and in Bangladesh and India (18 per cent). Among the Arab States, Algeria (25 per cent), Egypt and Yemen (22 per cent, respectively) have achieved the greatest increase.

Table 1
Regional literacy rates
(Percentage/weighted value)

	1985-1994			*2000-2007*		
	Total	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*M*	*F*
Arab States	58	70	46	71	80	62
Central and Eastern Europe	96	98	94	98	99	96
Central Asia	98	99	97	99	99	98
East Asia and the Pacific	82	89	75	93	96	91
Latin America/Caribbean	87	88	86	91	92	90
North America/Western Europe	99	99	99	99	100	99
South and West Asia	48	60	34	64	75	53
Sub-Saharan Africa	53	63	45	62	71	54
Worldwide	**76**	**82**	**70**	**84**	**89**	**80**

Source: *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010.*

3. Absolute numbers of non-literates

16. While the absolute number of non-literates worldwide has decreased, there are as many as 21 countries in which the absolute number of non-literates has increased in the 2000-2007 period compared to 1985-1994 (see table 2). Eleven of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa. The rise in the absolute figures of non-literates coincides with a decrease in overall literacy rate in only two countries. In all other countries the absolute number of non-literates increased while the overall literacy rate increased (see table 2). In some cases, the increase in the absolute number of non-literates is very large, indicating that literacy efforts are not keeping pace with population growth.

Table 2
Growth in absolute numbers of non-literate adults

	Adult literacy rates (Percentage)		*Absolute numbers of non-literate adults (In thousands)*		
Country	*1985-1994*	*2000-2007*	*1985-1994*	*2000-2007*	*Increase*
Arab States					
Bahrain	84	89	56	63	7
Egypt	44	66	16 428	16 824	396
Morocco	42	56	9 602	9 816	214
Yemen	37	59	4 686	5 081	395
East Asia and the Pacific					
Philippines	94	93	2 325	3 746	1 421
Viet Nam	88	90	4 789	6 033	1 244
Latin America/Caribbean					
Ecuador	88	84	731	1 413	682
Guatemala	64	73	1 915	2 055	140
Peru	87	90	1 848	1 992	144
South and West Asia					
Bangladesh	35	53	44 458	48 541	4 083
Sub-Saharan Africa					
Benin	27	41	2 131	3 022	891
Burkina Faso	14	29	4 136	5 684	1 548
Central African Republic	34	49	1 085	1 139	54
Chad	12	32	3 177	3 959	782
Côte d'Ivoire	34	49	4 180	4 831	651
Ethiopia	27	36	23 045	27 144	4 099
Liberia	41	56	652	881	229
Rwanda	58	65	1 468	1 491	23
Senegal	27	42	2 964	4 032	1 068
United Republic of Tanzania	59	72	5 217	6 237	1 020
Zambia	65	71	1 541	1 907	366

Source: *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010.*

C. Gender

17. With regard to the world population as a whole, while there is progress in closing the gender gap, which remains large, the literacy gender parity index (GPI) has improved from 0.854 (1985-1994) to 0.899 (2000-2007) worldwide. In terms of the proportion of the total number of non-literate adults worldwide, there was no progress: women accounted for 64 per cent for the period 2000-2007, a slight

increase over the 1985-1994 period (63 per cent). The relationship between literacy and gender is more complex, however, than these figures suggest. In Europe, North America and the Caribbean, educators are concerned about boys' relative lack of achievement in literacy, while gender disparity has all but disappeared in countries with adult literacy rates at 95 per cent or above. Nevertheless, the biggest challenge is the exclusion from education of women and girls in developing countries, where, as a whole, progress has been significant: the literacy gender parity index improved from 0.766 in 1985-1994 to 0.871 in 2000-2007. Some countries have shown impressive growth in female literacy rates. In Nepal, for example, the literacy rate for women increased from 17 per cent (1985-1994) to 44 per cent (2000-2007). Despite this progress, the gender gap remains large in general. It is especially marked in South and West Asia, in sub-Saharan Africa and in two Arab States, as shown in table 3. According to these data, Afghanistan (0.29) and Niger (0.35) face the largest challenge.

Table 3
Gender parity index: countries with the largest disparities

	1985-1994	*2000-2007*
Arab States		
Mauritania	0.52	0.63
Yemen	0.3	0.53
South and West Asia		
Afghanistan		0.29
Bhutan		0.59
Nepal	0.35	0.62
Pakistan		0.59
Sub-Saharan Africa		
Angola		0.65
Benin	0.42	0.53
Burkina Faso	0.42	0.59
Central African Republic	0.42	0.52
Chad		0.48
Côte d'Ivoire	0.53	0.63
Ethiopia	0.51	0.46
Guinea		0.43
Mali		0.52
Mozambique		0.58
Niger		0.35
Senegal	0.48	0.63
Sierra Leone		0.54
Togo		0.56

Source: Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010.

D. Projections 2015

18. Based on the projections in the 2010 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, the global adult literacy rate will reach about 87 per cent in 2015. This corresponds to only a small increase of 3 per cent from 2000-2007. The literacy rate in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to go up the most by 10 per cent — reaching 72 per cent. While this is slightly better than projected literacy rates in South and West Asia, it is very much behind the projected rates for the other regions. The proportion of women as a percentage of all non-literate adults is expected to decline by only 1 per cent globally. The projected numbers of non-literate youth (ages 15 to 24) are more encouraging: by 2015, they are expected to decrease by 25.5 per cent worldwide, from 125,401,000 to 93,365,000. According to the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, even in a best-case scenario the Dakar goal of halving the overall number of non-literate adults will not be reached by 2015. According to projections, the goal may be achieved only at a level of 50 to 66 per cent. The gaps between the Dakar goal and the projections are the largest for South and West Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States.[3]

III. United Nations Literacy Decade: International Strategic Framework for Action

A. Strategic objective A: To mobilize stronger commitment to literacy

19. Four strategies were spelled out under objective A: advocacy, clear policy formulation, improving assessment, monitoring and evaluation and stronger and more strategic partnerships. In reporting on each of these strategies, the pertinent activities and processes will be analysed for their actual and, in some cases, potential impact on the objective.

1. Advocacy

20. Given the continued relative neglect of youth and adult literacy in international agendas such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals, the need for advocacy is as great as ever. Increasingly, advocacy messages are grounded in empirical evidence, compiled at national and programme levels, on the impact of literacy acquisition on socio-economic and cultural development and on its empowering effect at the individual and community levels. Advocacy targets national Governments, their development partners, the international donor community and the private sector. Such advocacy is necessary not only in the so-called "developing" countries, but also in advanced economies where functional levels of literacy use may be inadequate for the demands of life and work.

21. Literacy and empowerment was the theme of the United Nations Literacy Decade in the last two years, with a specific focus on women in 2010. This theme was reinforced at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in June 2010, on the topic of "Gender equality and the empowerment of women". This was an occasion for UNESCO to highlight the current state of women and girls'

[3] See *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010*.

education worldwide, and to determine what needs to be done to achieve gender equality by 2015.

22. As the 2015 deadline approaches, the annual *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010* continues to provide data and analysis of the remaining challenge in basic education. The 2010 title of the report, *Reaching the Marginalized*, highlighted the need to adopt context-sensitive approaches if adequate opportunities for learning are to be available to disadvantaged groups. Language, ethnicity, gender relations, geographical situation and conflict, among other factors, require tailored approaches that mainstream education systems frequently do not offer.

23. China and the Republic of Korea continued to sponsor the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy and the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize, respectively, whose winners and honourable mentions in 2008 and 2009 represented Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, South Africa, the Philippines, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zambia. These prizes, awarded each year on International Literacy Day (8 September), not only highlight the ongoing challenges of literacy in particular circumstances, but also showcase effective and often inspiring practice. In 2009, the Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations Literacy Decade, Mrs. Laura Bush, stressed at the literacy prize ceremony that "Literacy is at the core of sustainable solutions to the world's greatest challenges. It provides the foundation for freedom and sustainable economic development". In March 2010, Mrs. Bush hosted the event "Educating and empowering the women and girls of Afghanistan: a conference on education and literacy" in Dallas, Texas, to focus the world's attention on the very low female literacy rate (13 per cent) in that country, showcasing successful actions and discussing the way forward.

24. UNESCO's Special Envoy for Literacy for Development, Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, gave keynote addresses at the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education, held in December 2009 in Belém, Brazil, and at the Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All, held in June 2010 in Abuja, Nigeria.

25. The Education for All Global Action Week 2009 called on Governments and international agencies, nine years after the adoption of the six Education for All goals, to give serious attention to prioritizing and funding the achievement of Education for All goal 4. Through the "Big Read" event, the Action Week raised awareness of the situation of those for whom literacy remains a closed book. Activities took place in over 100 countries.

26. In Asia, some of the countries participating in the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) made pledges to increase their advocacy efforts, with Pakistan declaring 2010 as National Literacy Year and integrating literacy as a specific strategy in its poverty reduction strategy paper.

27. Various informational and experience-sharing meetings and national media campaigns have been organized to promote an integrated and holistic vision of education, with literacy as a cross-cutting component (for example in Egypt and India) and holistic advocacy plans (Viet Nam).

2. Policy formulation

28. Over the period 2008-2010, a number of countries facing big challenges in youth and adult literacy have adopted new, clearer and stronger policies or plans to increase their literacy efforts. In 2009, India, which has the largest absolute number of non-literate people in the world, adopted an ambitious new programme *Saakshar Bharat* (Literate India) to reach 70 million people in the next three years, with a focus on women and disadvantaged populations. China's 2010 medium and long-term education reform and development plan outline, developed through extensive consultations, stresses the right of all citizens to receive education and focuses on marginalized and vulnerable groups, with a commitment to lifelong learning as a key policy goal. In 2010 Nigeria announced a new national literacy initiative, "Revitalizing adult and youth literacy and non-formal education", aimed at fast-tracking the achievement of Education for All goal 4 by 2015.

29. Within the framework of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, technical assistance was provided to a number of countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea and Mozambique, with regard to the formulation or improvement of national literacy policies, strategies and action plans. Similar support was provided to India from June to September 2009 for the elaboration of its new literacy framework and the above-mentioned *Saakshar Bharat* scheme. Further activities in this area include reviewing existing literacy and non-formal education policies and strategies, developing guidelines for reform and revision, including the necessary technical support for inclusion of literacy and non-formal education in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. During 2008-2010, various preliminary planning and policy review forums have been organized (including in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Eritrea, Grenada, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mongolia, Morocco and Papua New Guinea), and diagnostic studies prepared and validated (for example, Djibouti and Viet Nam).

30. The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education offered the opportunity to carry out a thorough assessment of adult literacy in Member States. The 154 national reports on the state of adult education submitted by Member States represented a major contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Literacy Decade. The reports reviewed the current state of literacy in each country, presented selected innovations and made recommendations on how to achieve the goals of the Decade, in general, and Education for All goals 3 (life skills) and 4 (adult literacy) in particular. During all five regional preparatory meetings in preparation for the Conference, cross-regional exchange was carried out on literacy achievement within and beyond the Decade. In addition, a thematic meeting on sustainable literacy was organized in the run-up to the Conference. At all of the meetings, literacy attracted special attention, and each of the regional outcome documents adopted at each meeting expressed a new resolve to take action in this area:

(a) In the **Africa region**, for example, the importance of promoting mother tongues was emphasized. This should be achieved through policy or by increasing the supply of materials needed to sustain literacy, numeracy and a culture of lifelong learning. A conducive, post-basic literacy environment should be supported by effective publishing and library policies, including subsidizing reading materials for new readers;

(b) The **Arab States** confirmed their commitment to achieving the Education for All goals set out in Dakar, especially those relating to literacy and adult education, as well as the goals of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment. In addition, they recommended that an Arab fund be set up to provide financial assistance to poor countries with high illiteracy rates;

(c) The **Asia and Pacific region** underscored the pressing need to expand adult access to literacy and learning, with agreement that urgent action and significant financial investment are required to combat marginalization, poverty and unemployment;

(d) The **European region** insisted on the need to recognize the crucial importance of literacy, language, numeracy, social, information and communications technology (ICT) and technical and vocational education and training competences within lifelong learning strategies, ensuring that adult learning and education programmes reflect the Education for All goals and the objectives of the United Nations Literacy Decade;

(e) **Latin America and the Caribbean** recommended approaches that strengthen and guarantee lifelong learning, including literacy and basic education, and the promotion of a culture of reading and writing as the basis for literate environments, with the goal of overcoming inequality and poverty in the region and fostering alternative forms of development.

3. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation

31. Ensuring effective planning and the provision of adequate access to literacy programmes as well as the quality of literacy learning required the availability of various kinds of information. Relevant, reliable and timely data are required to: (a) assess the real size of the literacy challenge, levels of literacy of the population and the population's learning needs; (b) monitor progress made in literacy under current programmes compared to policy objectives; (c) evaluate programme outcomes to ensure that their objectives have been reached; and (d) demonstrate the benefits and impact of literacy for improved social and economic opportunities.

32. New measures of literacy focus on different levels of competence and the applied use of skills in everyday life, rather than only counting those skills attached at school or through literacy programmes. The past two years have seen continued expansion of literacy assessment methods to test how far learners can actually use their literacy competencies, whether acquired at school as children or in non-formal programmes as adults. The developmental work for the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme, coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, has been completed. The Programme, which has been tried out in El Salvador, Jordan, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Paraguay and Viet Nam, offers both a revised approach for measuring reading and numeracy skills as well as a set of instruments for doing so and allows researchers to arrive at a more nuanced and sound assessment of levels of actual literacy skills.

33. Within the framework of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, China has recently completed an analysis and needs assessment of literacy status. The findings of this in-depth situation analysis have fed into recommendations for key strategies to accelerate literacy efforts and the preparation of a LIFE country support plan. Mongolia conducted an assessment of non-formal education, identifying key

priorities and policy changes necessary to enhance its quality and coverage. In addition, studies have been carried out on gender inequality among the illiterate population and on the literacy level of national minority groups. Technical assistance was provided for national literacy surveys and national data collection (including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and regional consultations on literacy and data collection on non-formal education were held in Africa.

34. Relevant, reliable and sustainable information and statistics are required to underpin the systematic monitoring of programmes and the measurement of progress towards policy goals, thus enabling policymakers and programme managers to improve the planning and delivery of programmes. Realizing that need, more countries have focused attention on initiating a non-formal education management information system, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Papua New Guinea and Senegal. UNESCO has developed a handbook and a prototype database and has been providing technical support and capacity development for the setting up of such systems. Countries that will be starting the process are Cambodia, Chad, Mauritania, Rwanda and Togo. In some countries (Bangladesh and Viet Nam for example), the focus was on community-based management information systems. In 2009 UNESCO produced and disseminated a guidebook on the development of a community learning centre — management information system. China has strengthened its literacy supervision and monitoring system whereby higher-level government bodies evaluate the performance of those at lower levels in order to ensure that literacy targets have been met.

4. Partnerships

35. Following the consultation on the International Strategic Framework for Action for the Decade in January 2009, a number of partners made commitments to cooperate in furthering the cause of literacy. Two United Nations agencies (the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP)) indicated that they would leverage their comparative advantage in United Nations coordination and school feeding, respectively, to support literacy policy and action. Four civil society organizations, ActionAid, the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education, the International Reading Association and the European Association for the Education of Adults, expressed their commitment to engage more vigorously in advocacy and capacity development for literacy. The Organización de los Estados Iberoamericanos pledged to increase cooperation with all relevant partners in the United Nations system and civil society to support greater efforts in literacy through their network. From the private sector, the Microsoft Corporation expressed a desire to cooperate in literacy and appointed a senior staff member as the Microsoft Champion of Literacy.

36. The Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All reinforced mutual cooperation among the nine high-population countries and with UNESCO and committed the countries to a substantial series of meetings, workshops and virtual exchanges on literacy issues over the next three years. It is expected that this partnership will attract the attention of other countries to literacy issues of common concern.

37. Using the framework of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment as a coordinating mechanism, United Nations agencies (UNESCO, the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)) have been brought together under the leadership of the Education Ministry in Afghanistan to promote literacy through three collaborative programmes, developed using the comparative advantage of each partner.

38. The newly approved (2010) strategy of WFP underpins its role in promoting literacy, which takes two distinct forms: its school feeding programmes make it possible for numbers of children to learn without suffering from hunger (22 million children across 75 countries in 2009), and literacy and numeracy training targets adolescents (above the age of 12) who are not in school.

39. In 2010, for the first time, the 10 members of the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization addressed literacy collectively, on the basis of the three priorities of the Decade's International Strategic Framework for Action, with a view to mutual support and a consistent approach to planning.

40. The French *Agence Nationale de Lutte contre l'Illettrisme* reinforced its commitment to literacy throughout the French-speaking countries through two conferences, one on the theme of sustainable literacy in preparation for the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education, and the other, in 2010, on sharing effective practices in reinforcing literacy competencies.

41. In 2010, a new partnership between UNESCO and the United States of America is in preparation that aims at addressing gender inequalities in literacy provision, with an emphasis on increasing learning opportunities for girls and women in formal and non-formal ways.

B. Strategic objective B: To reinforce effective literacy programme delivery

42. Four strategies were adopted under objective B: increasing the scale and quality of delivery, enriching literate environments, capacity development in all aspects of literacy and at all levels and research. In addition, this section will look at ways of learning from and sharing effective practices in literacy.

1. Scale and quality of delivery

43. The nine high-population countries of the global South, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan, face a particular challenge of scaling up to reach large numbers of non-literate people. Girls, female adolescents and women constitute a high proportion of this population, and focus on them has increased. India's new programme "*Saakshar Bharat*" targets 60 million women out of the total target population of 70 million. UNICEF-supported alternative learning centres in Nepal enable out-of-school children to acquire basic skills — over 66 per cent of these children are girls.

44. The nine above-mentioned countries, and other countries, also face questions on how to decentralize the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of literacy programmes. An Asia-Pacific workshop on this topic in 2009 resulted in a guide in this crucial area.

45. More than half of the 35 countries engaged in the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment are in Africa, where a midterm review was carried out in March 2010. The skills of more than 150 managers, specialists and practitioners working in the area of literacy provision were reinforced. This was achieved by sharing effective approaches to strengthen national commitment; mobilizing resources, reaching and integrating disadvantaged groups; improving the quality of literacy and life-skills programmes; promoting literate environments in rural areas; and assessing learning achievements, impacts and programmes. The review also assessed progress made with regard to efforts to link literacy and life-skills to development goals, gender mainstreaming and other cross-cutting issues such as poverty, migration, HIV prevention and climate change. The review demonstrated that the Initiative continues to be an effective framework for collaboration, advocacy and technical support. In addition, the review recommended that more resources be mobilized in the participating countries, and by UNESCO, in order to advance literacy in most African countries.

46. Reaching populations not well served by the mainstream school system often means establishing accelerated learning tracks for adolescents and young people, enabling them to re-enter the formal system at an appropriate level or obtain a qualification equivalent to primary schooling. Angola, Malawi and Pakistan have adopted such approaches, with the support of UNICEF, and others (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia) have done so by creating accreditation mechanisms, focusing on bridges to the formal system for disadvantaged groups.

47. Easy access to literacy learning is facilitated by using the mother tongue of learners, most frequently structured within a multilingual approach that gives access, at a second stage, to other languages that learners wish to acquire. Both school-based and non-formal literacy learning increasingly take this approach. UNICEF promotes mother tongue-based multilingual education in three states in India. In January 2010, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, in cooperation with UNESCO, produced guidelines for the integration of African languages and cultures into education in African countries. In the Asia/Pacific region, mother tongue-based literacy was improved through evaluations in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand. Efforts to address language issues in literacy were given a boost by the United Nations International Year of Languages, whose 2009 report noted new initiatives in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Viet Nam to use minority/indigenous languages for literacy learning.

48. Literacy is an essential part of bridging the digital divide, and countries continue to explore the use of ICT in literacy in two ways: as a means of learning, and as an important application of literacy. To that end, ICT learning tools have been developed in Bangladesh, China and Pakistan. In Pakistan a non-governmental organizations also used mobile phones and texting as learning tools. Training material for ICT-based literacy provision has been developed in India.

49. The strategy of developing community learning centres continued to gain in popularity during the reporting period, offering a means of strengthening community participation and ownership of literacy programmes and of linking literacy learning with the acquisition of other locally relevant vocational and technical skills. A large number of countries offer community-based literacy programmes through the centres, which, increasingly, are providing a platform for

lifelong learning. In Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan has established such centres with a focus on post-literacy and life skills training that target marginalized populations and women in geographically isolated areas. Nepal conducted an interim assessment of the programmes, and participatory research was conducted in 23 countries to determine their effectiveness in providing literacy and continuing education. Findings were shared at a regional meeting in Indonesia in 2009. In this regard, Timor-Leste has focused on setting minimum guidelines, producing materials for vocational skills and expanding coverage, while in Bangladesh the centres are being developed as delivery mechanisms for lifelong learning, including education for sustainable development.

2. Creating a literate environment and sustaining literacy

50. In some countries with poorly stocked literate environments, newly literate people have little opportunity to practise and sustain their competencies. Specific programmes have increased the focus on the production of such materials (in Afghanistan, India, Madagascar and Malawi) and on making them easily available, for example through local reading rooms and libraries (China), or in more general ways. Other countries have tackled the same issue by integrating relevant topics and lifeskills (for example, gender, sustainable development and HIV/AIDS prevention) into the literacy curriculum (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan). Post-literacy materials produced by UNESCO, particularly on gender and on HIV/AIDS, continue to be in demand and have been translated into indigenous languages in both Ethiopia and Madagascar.

51. In 2010, UNESCO entered into a partnership with the United States to develop "open educational resources" for literacy programmes. These resources are learning materials that can be freely used and modified by teachers and students. The tools are typically delivered electronically and can also be accessed offline, enabling a more rapid transfer of best practices in pedagogy.

3. Capacity development

52. Key national stakeholder meetings for needs assessment for capacity development at various levels have been organized in a number of countries and needs assessment studies have been undertaken (including in Chad, China, Eritrea, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Yemen). At both the regional and country levels, countries have received support in building institutional, administrative and professional capacity for literacy.

53. The capacity of educators and teachers, in both formal and non-formal programmes, is critical to effective learning and is receiving focused attention from Governments and international partners in Bolivia, China, Madagascar and Mongolia. In Mongolia, training at national level reaches 50 educators annually. In 2009, in cooperation with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), adult literacy in multilingual contexts was strengthened through a cross-regional workshop organized in Addis Ababa, which was attended by 50 specialists in literacy and non-formal education from Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States. In 2010, the Ministry of Basic Education of Niger and UNESCO organized a workshop for national adult literacy and non-formal education specialists from the *Centre de formation des cadres de l'alphabétisation* in order to develop a curriculum and modules for the training of

literacy trainers. Training sessions were also conducted in Guinea, Gabon and Senegal (training for trainers of literacy facilitators) as well as in Bangladesh (HIV/AIDS prevention linked to literacy provision); training materials were prepared (e.g. in Nepal and China for training for literacy provision through community learning centres).

54. Using generic guides produced at the regional level and other resources, countries produced their own frameworks for the training of literacy and non-formal education facilitators and managers (Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia).

55. Given the large literacy needs in the nine high-population countries of the global South, the China-based International Institute for Rural Education, with its local and international partners, boosted the capacities of 70 literacy specialists, equipping them to analyse and design strategies for literacy and adult learning in rural areas. The seminar also provided an opportunity to review the progress made in literacy and adult education within the framework of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, the United Nations Literacy Decade and Education for All in eight countries participating in the Initiative.

56. In addition, 10 countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania) received assistance in refining national literacy policies and strategies and in training senior and middle-level literacy and non-formal education personnel in: curricular and materials development; the assessment of ongoing delivery schemes such as the community learning centres in Nepal; advocacy; training and monitoring systems; research; and ways of strengthening literate environments.

4. Research

57. In the area of educational research, where there is relatively little research into youth and adult literacy, the collection and analysis of evidence for policymaking and programme design, experimentation with innovative approaches and the systematic evaluation of outcomes and impact are limited in number and scope. This concern is increasingly being voiced, however, as evidenced by a number of positive developments over the reporting period.

58. In Bangladesh, the *Bangladesh Education Journal* published a contribution to a researcher's forum on new educational policies and policy dialogue.

59. In 2009, the University of East Anglia brought researchers together to examine approaches to literacy inequalities, for which the United Nations Literacy Decade gave a framework for addressing both theoretical and programmatic concerns in promoting literacy opportunities.

60. A multi-country research project (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Niger and Senegal) was launched by UNESCO in 2009, with a focus on developing tools for measuring the learning outcomes of youth and adults participating in literacy programmes.

61. During 2010, along with the ongoing sharing of effective practices in literacy through web-based platforms, UNESCO initiated the development of the "Knowledge and Innovations Network for Literacy", which aims to support the vision of a literate world "through the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge, and by innovation, advocacy and brokering connections between

research, policy and practice". Operating virtually, it will provide a platform for cooperative research and action among the community of literacy thinkers and practitioners worldwide.

62. As an output from the earlier (2007-2008) series of regional literacy conferences, UNESCO initiated a new series entitled *Emerging Trends in Literacy*, the first four volumes of which are due to appear in late 2010. The collection, which includes commissioned work, focuses on policies, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, programme delivery and the literate environment.

C. Strategic objective C: To harness new resources for literacy

63. Despite some positive trends, funding for literacy is far from being sufficient to achieve universal literacy. The financial crisis poses a very real challenge to education budgets and international funding for education, with a possible negative effect on spending for literacy programmes.

1. Government funding

64. Youth and adult literacy is mainly funded by Governments. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, Government funding is the source most frequently mentioned for literacy and non-formal education, although non-governmental organizations also invest strongly, and donor funds may provide additional support. Senegal is exceptional: 93 per cent of the funding for adult literacy comes from external resources.[4]

65. The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education reaffirmed the recommendation set out in the Belem Framework of Action, to "seek investment of at least 6 per cent of GNP in education and work towards increased investment in adult learning and education". The Global Campaign for Education has promoted the benchmark of allocating at least 3 per cent of the national education budget to adult literacy.[5] Very few countries meet the 6 per cent recommendation. The Nordic countries, however, provide a positive example: public spending on education amounts to 7 to 8 per cent of GNP per country.[4] In the national reports of Germany and Hungary to the Sixth International Conference it was noted that adult education receives, respectively, 1.05 per cent and 1 per cent of GDP. Owing to different standards of measurements (the share of GNP versus GDP) these figures should be read with care.

66. There are positive signs in some countries that funding for literacy programmes has recently increased. China, for example, increased its annual funding for literacy from $1.2 million to $7.4 million during the period 2007-2010. Nigeria increased the funding for the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education from $0.36 million in 2007 to $11.1 million in 2010. In Brazil, the federal Government increased its investment in the "Literate Brazil" programme by 27 per cent between 2008 and 2009. India has made $1.2 billion available for the *Saakshar Bharat* programme for the years from 2009 to 2012.[6]

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[4] See Aitchison and Alidou, in *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*, 2009.

[5] Global Benchmarks for Literacy, Global Campaign for Education/ActionAid International, 2005.

[6] See Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All 2010, Abuja (unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001885/188530e.pdf) country reports.

However, the national reports for the Sixth International Conference show that the long-term trends in public spending on adult education are mostly mixed, increasing in some years, decreasing in others. Pakistan reported to the Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All that within its five-year plans the share of literacy allocations has oscillated between 1 and 8.6 per cent, meaning that there is very little predictable financing for adult education and literacy in the long term.[4]

67. The total share of the education budget allocated to adult literacy falls far below the recommended level of 3 per cent. Many countries spend only about 1 per cent of their education budget on adult literacy (see table 4), a level which government providers concede falls far short of the necessary resources. Nigeria, for example, considers poor funding at all levels of government as one of the most serious constraints in fighting illiteracy. Pakistan also admits that funds for adult literacy "have remained severely inadequate".[7] Both the lack of funding and its unpredictability undermine the sustainable planning of literacy education, seriously hampering the progress in achieving literacy.

Table 4
Share of allocation for adult literacy in selected national education budgets

Country	*Share of allocation (percentage)*	*Year*
Chad	0.96	2007
Guatemala	less than 1	annually
Mozambique	3 (literacy and adult education)	2006-2007
Nepal	1.13 (literacy and non-formal education)	2005-2006
Pakistan	0.74	1998-2003
Rwanda	0.50	2008
Senegal	0.70	2008
Yemen	1.4 (literacy and adult education)	2007

Source: national reports prepared for the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education.

2. Funding by bilateral and multilateral organizations

68. The achievement of universal primary education has been the dominant focus of donor funding over the past years. The Education for All "Fast Track Initiative" exclusively supports Education for All goal 2 (primary education and the gender dimension of goal 5), except in a very few cases where governments insisted on including adult literacy in their submissions to the Initiative. It does not give priority to funding any non-formal education or second-chance education for youth or adults to acquire basic education equivalent to universal primary education.[4] In 2010, however, action by the Education for All Board for the Initiative opened the door to more holistic funding of the six Education for All goals — a positive development for the funding of adult literacy.

[7] Ibid., Nigeria and Pakistan country reports.

69. WFP, for example, spent at least $67 million on food for training activities that support literacy and numeracy in 2008.[8] The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment has been successful in mobilizing funds for literacy, and in several countries, multilateral agencies and bilateral donors have provided resources within the framework of that Initiative, in particular the Nordic countries through its Capacity-building for Education for All Programme. For example, in 2008, the programme for the enhancement of literacy in Afghanistan was launched by UNESCO and the Afghan Ministry of Education. Afghanistan received a grant of $35 million from the Government of Japan for a literacy programme that will benefit around 300,000 learners.

70. In 2009, within the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, UNESCO provided Iraq with technical support for its project on capacity-building in literacy provision, funded by Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned, First Lady of Qatar and UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education. The European Union, with UNESCO as technical partner, is funding parts of the Moroccan literacy project, which is part of the Capacity-building for Education for All Programme. Since 2009, assistance has been provided to refining national literacy policies and training non-formal education personnel in 10 countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania) through extrabudgetary funding.

3. Private and civil society funding sources

71. Private organizations and non-governmental organizations provide an important complementary funding source for literacy programmes. In the Arab region, for example, civil society organizations devise their own literacy programmes.[4] Public-private partnerships are emerging as a trend in the field of funding adult literacy. In India, for example, Tata Consultancy Services has launched a computer-based literacy programme.

4. Impact of the financial crisis

72. In order to achieve the literacy target alone, $2.5 billion will be needed every year until 2015. This demands a great effort in scaling up resources. The financial crisis seriously threatens to undermine this effort, as shown in the analysis contained in the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* (2010) on the potential impact of the financial crisis on education spending. According to a preliminary survey conducted by UNESCO, countries are making efforts to protect their education budgets, although in some cases cuts are foreseen. While overall development aid has been rising over the past years, large financing gaps for basic education remain, and aid commitments are slowing down. Since official development assistance (ODA) is defined in relation to gross national income (GNI) and economic growth is projected to slow down, this may have a damaging impact on the amount of aid provided. If the share of education in overall aid remains as it was in 2007, this could lead to a shortfall of $890 million in aid for education from European donors in 2010. If the share of expenditure invested in education remains the same, the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* projects that the funds available for education in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, could fall by $4.6 billion a year, on average, in 2009 and 2010. Based on this scenario, the financial crisis is likely to

[8] World Food Programme, Annual Performance Report 2008 (WFP/EB.A/2009/4).

have a negative impact on external support for literacy programmes. Egypt, for example, has reported that the crisis has an impact on the general budget for literacy. While the budget grew by 2.5 per cent in 2008, it only increased by 0.3 per cent in 2009.[9]

IV. Future action and challenges: 2012 and beyond

73. The United Nations Literacy Decade has just over two years left to run: it is urgent to further scale up efforts and to consider the post-2012 strategy for addressing the youth and adult literacy challenges. In pursuit of the overall objectives of the Decade and the specific priorities established for the remaining years, the following elements are essential to guide current work and inform priorities for the future:

(a) **Sustained political commitment**: two principles underlie sustained political commitment to literacy for youth and adults: first, literacy as an essential and integral part of the right to education which every person should enjoy; second, the links between literacy and human, socio-economic and cultural development. Without a clear commitment to both principles, certain sections of the population will continue to be neglected in national and international educational policies and strategies;

(b) **Literacy for development**: there is general agreement that literacy is not a stand-alone skill or technique. Literacy is only as valuable as the purposes that people use it for. Thus there is a move away from literacy learning as a process of spelling out words on a page towards a more functional concept of literacy — for personal and community empowerment, for improved livelihoods, for a better quality of life. Literacy learning must be embedded in the learning of other skills, so that the focus from the start is on how learners will use literacy in their lives. This is not merely an economic issue, but also one of social participation and voice, using literacy to express oneself and one's identity, to take part in social and democratic processes, to play a full part in society. The implications are that literacy learning focuses on the learner and her/his patterns of communication, socio-economic circumstances and cultural identity;

(c) **Scaling up quality literacy efforts**: based on projections of current rates of progress, the number of non-literate adults in the world is estimated to be reduced only by about 10 per cent by 2015. There is no room for business as usual — it is quite clear that current efforts will not meet the challenge. Scaling up will necessarily involve a much larger investment, backed by strong and sustained political commitment, explicit policies and feasible, large-scale implementation strategies. This will also require learning the lessons of effective practice and applying them in new contexts. Literacy programmes for youth and adults cannot simply be replicated, however successful they may be — context, culture, language, purpose and motivation are all critical factors. Planning to scale up must address the complexity and diversity of learners' lives and circumstances — there is no short cut to quality learning;

[9] See Egypt, country report, for the Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All (see unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001885/188530e.pdf).

(d) **International partnerships**: the United Nations Literacy Decade has raised the profile of literacy on various national, regional and international agendas, but it has not resulted in strong international partnerships, either within the United Nations system or among the donor/funding community. As the Decade moves into its final phase, and as the 2015 target date for achieving the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals nears, it is urgent to develop stronger international partnerships in support of literacy efforts at national level. A higher international profile will do much to boost political commitment and greater resources;

(e) **Funding**: there are several positive trends that are at risk owing to the financial and economic crisis, although Governments are expressing strong determination to maintain literacy, and education more broadly, as national budget priorities. However, almost everywhere, the literacy challenge outstrips the means. Thus, literacy provision will continue to require increased resources from Governments and communities, as well as stronger support from development partners. The overarching frameworks of the Decade and the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, as well as the Millennium Development Goals, and the Education for All goals, provide well-tried channels for scaling up funding;

(f) **Literacy and the Millennium Development Goals**: the Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All stressed the critical importance of literacy for achieving the Millennium Development Goals by addressing the following message to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in September 2010:

> The E-9 countries, representing 54 per cent of the world's population and 67 per cent of the world's non-literates, lay emphasis on the following principles in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals:
>
> - The Millennium Development Goals, individually and as a whole, cannot be achieved without education and the fulfilment of all six Education for All goals, ensuring that every society becomes a learning society where individuals and communities are equipped to adopt and adapt change in their lives;
> - Literacy, as an indispensable learning tool and key indicator of quality education, must be vigorously promoted, inside and outside of school systems, for every child, adolescent, young person and adult.
>
> We urge the Heads of State and of Government to make youth and adult literacy a priority investment for achieving all the Millennium Development Goals.